

The President's proposed budget seriously jeopardizes the future funding mechanism of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Crime Victims Fund. The Fund was enacted to pay for victims' services and compensations. It operates with money collected from criminal offenders, not taxpayers. Once collected, the funding is distributed to victims and organizations that provide victims' services. There are approximately 4,400 agencies that depend upon the victim assistance funds to provide direct services to 3.6 million crime victims a year.

"During National Crime Victims' Rights Week, it is crucial to remember the needs of victims and the resources we can provide them with," stated Costa. "The Crime Victims Fund is crucial to many communities and organizations that rely on it for victims' services and compensation. The Fund helps provide funding for domestic violence shelters, victims' compensation for court costs, funeral services and medical expenses," Costa said.

President Bush's budget proposes removing all amounts deposited during FY 2006 and putting this money in the general fund. This means that there would be no money left in the Crime Victims Fund to distribute in FY 2007. This proposal would severely hurt crime victims' programs. Despite the President's proposal, congressional appropriators have consistently stated that all amounts in the Crime Victims Fund be kept there for victims and victims' services.

"I strongly oppose the President's budget proposal that would zero out the Crime Victims Fund," stated Costa. "The Fund provides many crucial services to victims in the Central Valley. For example, every county probation department in the 20th district receives Crime Victims Funding. In addition, Clinica Sierra Vista uses the funding to provide health services to victims of crime and Marjorie Mason Center uses the funding to help victims of domestic violence," said Costa.

"Crime victims have suffered enough. During this week, it is important to remember how we can improve their lives. The Crime Victims Fund provides a great service to victims," Costa concluded.

Congressman Costa is a founding member of the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus.

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